

marked will be available within the region. The regional depot buys only the titles which the participating libraries do not buy but which would be of use if available within the region.

New York State is also experimenting with one state service depot at Watertown. But at Watertown it is regarded as an experiment which may well end with the participating libraries taking over the service.

There are several states which plan to establish service depots similar to the Country Library Service depots in New Zealand. But there is the difference that most of them intend to establish a regional advisory board for each depot. Some expect that the board may, later, perhaps, become the legal governing authority of the regional service. There is also another difference between these plans and the depot system which the Country Library Service is operating in New Zealand. Most plans assume that the headquarters of the depot will be within easy motoring distance of all points in the region.

In the case of the state of Connecticut, the proposed plans provide for regions which seem to us very small indeed. Connecticut is a very small state, about half the size of Nelson Province. It is recommended that there should be four state service depots and that each should be equipped with a truck for distribution to the surrounding libraries.

(to be concluded)



## REFERENCE WORK AT THE ALEXANDER TURNBULL LIBRARY

MARGARET ALINGTON

### DESCRIPTION

THE Pacific collection at the Alexander Turnbull Library is made up of printed, manuscript, and illustrative material. Without going into details about the quality and scope of the different sections, I shall mention a few groups that are important from a reference point of view.

First there is printed material in the form of *books*. The early period in New Zealand, Australian and Oceanic literature is well represented, but since Turnbull's day, special libraries have grown up to cover scientific subjects, for example, so that we can now afford to be selective, and to concentrate on history and anthropology, and subjects that are not likely to be covered by other libraries. There are many complete sets of Pacific voyages; Turnbull's habit of collecting all pamphlets and having them bound separately has led to the survival of many items that are now unique copies; and by his acquisition of all available texts in Maori and the island languages, he has bequeathed to the scholar a means for comparative research in this field that is not equalled elsewhere.

*Periodicals* form a large part of our Pacific resources. These include many defunct titles, and several sets like the *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* and the *Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society* which contain useful information about New Zealand in their 19th century volumes. Some of the early New Zealand journals have unexpected and useful articles in them, for example, the *New Zealand Country Journal*, but until indexes have been compiled, their usage is limited.

Early *newspapers* from all parts of New Zealand (and some Australian) are held. Some of these are very incomplete, notably West Coast papers, but in many cases they are all that are extant, so far as libraries are concerned. Only one newspaper, the *Evening Post*, is received currently. We also hold many special numbers of newspapers.

*Maps*, both manuscript and published, are in process of being catalogued. Gaps in the coverage of early maps are made good when possible by photostat copies. A selection only of modern maps is acquired.

*Paintings, prints, and photographs* are in demand in their own right, but sometimes they are also able to throw light on a reference question. There is a card catalogue of the paintings and prints, most of which are mounted and kept in cardboard cases. The photographs, both negatives and positives, form a separate section of the Library, and are cared for by two assistants. In time, we hope that the Photograph Section will be in a position to issue subject catalogues for some of its collections, for example, for shipping, in which it is especially strong. Orders for all photographic work go through the Section, and are executed by the Ministry of Works (copycats and photostats), or the National Publicity Studios (photographs and microfilm).

*Newspaper clippings*, supplied currently through the Government Advertising Office's press-clipping service, are sorted and filed. All biographical material, including obituary notices, are pasted up, bound in book form, and indexed in a central card index. Cuttings of his-

*This paper was presented at the Seminar for Librarians of New Zealand Collections held at the N.Z.L.A. Conference, Christchurch, 23rd February 1956.*

torical interest are kept in the first instance in a vertical file, which has a geographical arrangement by counties into which most of the clippings are put, but there is also a smaller section, arranged by subject. As each folder in the file becomes full, the clippings are pasted up, indexed, bound, and catalogued. Pasting and indexing are slow processes, so that care is taken to preserve only factual articles.

There is quite a large collection of "loose" material which does not fall easily into any of the usual categories, but which is useful to the research student, and therefore worth keeping. We call this body of material *Programmes, &c.*, but in addition to theatre, concert, and sports programmes, it includes catalogues of exhibitions, prospectuses of companies, tourist broad-sheets, political notices, forms of church services, lists of members and rules of societies, menus marking special occasions. No attempt at indexing has been made; the leaflets are kept in a shallow-drawer steel cabinet, and are arranged by subject.

Finally there is the *Manuscript* Section. This includes not only the diaries and papers of many figures in New Zealand's history, for which a published catalogue is in preparation, but also the detailed notes and maps, unfinished as well as completed, of the now defunct Historical Branch of the Department of Internal Affairs. These were prepared for an historical atlas which was never published, but the notes and maps, representing the results of many years' research by post-graduate students, have been placed on deposit in the Library, where they have been broadly indexed and arranged so that they can be used by students.

#### TYPES OF REPRODUCTION REPRESENTED

Several types of reproduction are represented in these groups. The most common is, of course, *printing*, but there is a growing collection of manuscripts, typescripts, and microfilms and photostats. *Manuscripts* are kept separate, but connected with them, although shelved with the ordinary books, are *typescripts*. A family is sometimes unwilling to hand over to the Library important letters or journals in its possession, but it will allow the papers to be borrowed and copied. These typescript copies are then bound, and often indexed, and take their place on the shelves and in the catalogue along with the books. They include the journals of the Rev. Richard Taylor (15 foolscap volumes), and the papers of Sir Donald Maclean (57 quarto volumes). The wisdom of this method of reproduction may be questioned, for undoubtedly many errors of interpretation creep in during the typing. From a reference point of view, this is not necessarily a serious handicap, particularly if the location of the originals is noted on the title-page. The research student or editor, on the other hand, may be seriously hampered by inaccurate copying. For that reason, *photographic reproduction* by photostats or prints developed from microfilm offers a more faithful record, but here we come up against the difficulty of handwriting—a manuscript copy is by no means as easy to read as a typescript copy. Thus there is a place for both methods of



reproduction for the same group of papers. The typescript is to be preferred for general use, but it needs to be supplemented by a microfilm copy for the use of those giving the papers more intensive study.

We have some 70 microfilms of manuscripts and books that are not held elsewhere in the Library. They are catalogued in the same way as a book or a manuscript, except that the word MICRO., or MICRO. MS. replaces the classification number. The films are arranged by author, and are kept in a shallow-drawn steel cabinet. Microfilms of this nature, which are held to supplement the Library's collection of books and manuscripts, are distinguished from microfilms (and photostats) which are held purely for copying purposes and housed in the Photographic Section. These include items like the Treaty of Waitangi, and certain manuscripts that are frequently asked for and that would soon show signs of wear if the original were constantly being submitted to the photographer.

#### ACCESS TO THE COLLECTIONS

From the foregoing list, it will be realised that something more than the Library's main catalogue and published bibliographies\* is needed to provide access to such a diversity of material. In order to supplement the subject headings in the main catalogue, which can only be fairly broad, the Reference Department maintains a number of smaller special catalogues and indexes. We have what we call the *Reference Catalogue*, a name that is not self-explanatory, but it provides an incipient index to the whole Pacific collection. It was begun in 1947 by Miss Nola Millar, who went through every book in the New Zealand pamphlet section, the History, and Description and Travel sections, noting useful information which she recorded on cards under subject headings. To this have been added the answers to enquiries that we receive over the years, and the references quoted are taken from all the sections of the Library—books, manuscripts, newspapers, prints, periodicals—wherever the details in answer to a question are to be found. The sources relating to people are so extensive that they require a separate sequence, known as the *Biographies Catalogue*. This includes an index to obituary notices past and present which are pasted up and bound, as well as to biographical material in general.

The card index to *Portraits* is extensive, and is used not only for the purpose which its name suggests, but also as a guide to information about a person, for the chances are that if there is a portrait, there is also accompanying text.

Early shipping arrivals and their passengers have been listed from the New Zealand Company's *Embarkation Register*, from Wellington newspapers between 1840 and 1860, and from some Canterbury newspapers.

\* No attempt has been made in this paper to cover published bibliographies and catalogues.

A number of smaller indexes are also very useful. A typescript index to the *Sydney Gazette*, from 1803 to 1842, gives a lead to dates of events, and is useful even although we do not possess a complete file of the newspaper itself. New Zealand material in the *Illustrated London News* and the *Illustrated Sydney News* has been indexed, and there are partial indexes to the *New Zealand Journal* and the *Nelson Examiner*. In the Dunedin Public Library's staff manual for 1938, there is a "list of articles on special subjects appearing in issues of the New Zealand official yearbook previous to 1938." Although I am not attempting to deal with published reference works in this paper, I cannot refrain from mentioning a volume that is known by the Lands Department as its Domesday Book; it is a *Return of the Freeholders of New Zealand, 1882*, and is very useful for identifying the names and whereabouts of early settlers.

#### USERS

Although we are a public library and therefore open to all, the number of people using the Library in any one year is far from impressive by Public Library standards. Many of our readers are engaged upon long-term research, and it is with them and their counterparts in other places, both within New Zealand and overseas, that our time is chiefly taken up. Here are some examples of the sort of enquiries we receive, and the people who make them. A Government department preparing a report on the Tangiwai disaster wants all references, manuscript as well as published, to previous floods in the river; a school is about to celebrate its jubilee and wants help with the early history of the district for a publication it is preparing; journalists are always on the look-out for a "story", and the "Listener" frequently requests illustrations for its articles; a local church found its centenary had been celebrated ten years too soon, and wanted a statement about its correct opening date; post-graduate students of all ages and several countries are writing theses or books with a New Zealand or Pacific background; our own staff sometimes need help with the identification of an author, or a map. These readers are few in number, but their needs are many, and often require all the ingenuity that the Reference Librarian can bring to bear.

#### INTERLOAN

In all our enquiries, it is important to remember that, outstanding as our own collection may be, there are other sources of New Zealand history apart from our own Library. We are constantly in touch with National Archives, and Government departments, e.g., Lands and Survey, that still house their own archives. We need to know something of the resources of similar libraries and collections, not only in New Zealand, but overseas. Thus we often have cause to write to the Mitchell Library, the British Museum and other libraries in London, and the Archives Nationales and the Ministère de la Marine in Paris. In these days of air-mails and photographic reproduction, it is not

enough for us to state that we cannot find the answer on our own shelves, or that we do not hold a certain periodical or book; they can often be brought to the reader in a very short time by means of microfilm or interloan, and in any case a few weeks' wait is neither here nor there when someone is engaged in research lasting for several years.

#### ACQUISITIONS

A close liaison between the Reference Librarian and the research student may lead to some profitable acquisitions for the Library. For instance, an historical writer has been working on Surville's expedition to New Zealand and the Pacific in 1769-70, and his desire to locate all the journals of the voyage has led to the Library's acquiring on microfilm all that are extant from various sources in Paris. Again, a student who is in touch with some of our early established families may be the means of important family papers' passing into the Library's custody.

The Reference Librarian is in a good position to notice any gaps there might be in the collections, and can see that an attempt is made to fill them, if necessary from the second-hand market or by photocopies. A set of the *United Service Journal* from 1829 to 1854 has recently been located for us by an English bookseller, and our shelves are beginning to be sprinkled with photostat copies of pamphlets that have been bound and catalogued like any other book. As well as helping to fill gaps, it is also important for the Reference Librarian to keep abreast of incoming material in all sections of the Library.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHIES AND INDEXES

In a small country such as ours, not even every research library can afford to have a large selection of general bibliographies, catalogues, and dictionaries. Thus the Turnbull Library does not hold the full set of the British Museum author catalogue, for example, nor the *Dictionnaire de Biographie Française*. Both of these works would be useful to us, but there are two sets of the British Museum catalogue in libraries near us in Wellington, and the University Library is taking the *Dictionnaire*, so that although enquiries involving the use of both of these cannot be given on the spot, the delay is nevertheless not unreasonable for a research library. A small duplicated list of the locations of the major works of general reference held in libraries throughout the country would help in this respect, and save some correspondence when a particular work is required.

Although, in a research library, one is not always called upon to provide the answer to an enquiry on the spur of the moment, more aids to quick reference in New Zealand studies would be very welcome. This Library and the Auckland branch of the NZLA have provided several of our standard books with indexes, but there are still no detailed indexes of important works like the British Parliamentary papers relating to New Zealand, the New Zealand Company's reports, and the Provincial Council papers. Much of the early litera-



ture on New Zealand does not merit detailed indexing, but the method of analysis which forms the basis of the Reference Catalogue might be adopted. Some interesting accounts and comments are buried in the volumes of voyages, for example, and many of our early periodicals lie almost untouched through lack of access. We can point out to any authors who cross our paths the importance of an index, although it appears to be the publishers who need to be persuaded. This Library's full index to Cowan's *The New Zealand Wars* was recently offered to the Government Printer for inclusion in his new edition of that work, but it was rejected on the grounds of economy.

Subject bibliographies too are rare, although these are possibly more numerous than they appear, as they may not be known outside the Library in which they have been compiled. In the absence of full-scale histories of places like the Hokianga (one of the oldest settled parts of the country) and Auckland, subject bibliographies would be of considerable help. Before enumerating all the bibliographies and indexes we should like to have in front of us, however, it is only fair to consider what has been done, and is now being done. Their compilation on a national scale (e.g., the Union List of Serials) is an expensive and lengthy undertaking, but reference librarians can make a contribution in the restricted field of regional bibliographies, or even perhaps subject bibliographies, as time and qualifications allow.

#### DOCUMENTATION

In view of the shortage of published bibliographical aids, the question of documentation and what we do with the details we find in answer to a question becomes very important. The locating of these details may take days of searching, and may be found in one or several of the categories listed in the introductory section of this paper. The results of this research on the part of the staff are too valuable to be dismissed in a letter that is buried on a file, or in a verbal reply, and deposited nowhere apart from the assistant's mind, safe though they may be during the term of office of that particular assistant. Although an enquiry may not be repeated in its exact form for several years, if at all, the answer to one question may very well provide a partial answer to another question, for our history goes back little more than a hundred years, and the further back we go in this period, the more related the lives and incidents become. To help keep track of these details, we use a simple routine that is economical of time, for a complicated recording system would defeat the purpose of the idea. We have a printed pad of "Inquiry" slips, with details of the question, the enquirer's name, address, and telephone number, and the day's date. This is on the front of the slip. On the back are put the exact references, even to page numbers, of the sources of the information found. These slips are used for all enquiries, whether made by letter, telephone, or in person. The references are eventually transferred on to a card, under a suitable subject heading which follows the headings used by the Library as nearly as possible, although

they do, of course, have to be modified occasionally. The cards are filed in the Reference Catalogue, and the slips kept in a chronological sequence where they are useful for two purposes; they provide not only a record of the number of questions received in a year, should these be required for the annual report, etc., but also a quick method of finding the enquirer's name if further information should turn up weeks or months after the enquiry has been made. This is particularly useful in the case of personal or telephone enquiries, where no correspondence exists.

Sometimes the number of references found are sufficiently numerous to form a bibliography, for example the material we collected on Surville. They are then typed out and put into a pamphlet binding and catalogued in the usual way.

A routine for dealing with newspaper clippings and programmes &c. seems specially necessary, because of the temptation to push such material aside, particularly if it comes in by the boxful as the donation of some elderly collector; but the contents of boxes of clippings in the attic of the Turnbull Library that were brought to light during the recent removal operations, showed us that we certainly cannot afford to ignore some people's collections at any rate.

Lest we become over-conscientious in our zeal for recording details, however, I think it is important to remember that no amount of "systems" can take the place of a first-class assistant with a background and interest in the subject, who from his knowledge of the Library's resources and his observations and associations, can put his finger on information in a way that defies even the most efficient systems of indexing and cross-references. Ideally though, both the good assistant and good documentation are necessary.

#### STANDARDS

Perhaps it is hardly fair to comment on the standard of our aids to reference when those that we have are comparatively few, and are valued for their very existence, but on the other hand trained librarians are no longer a rarity in the country, so that the quality of the bibliographical work done should be improving all the time. A glance at our own special catalogues shows that suitable assistance has not always been available, with the result that some of the references are unintelligible and therefore useless. Some works which we use in the absence of anything better, notably Finn's *Datus* and Fletcher's *Index to Maori Names in Standard Texts* (unpublished), show a similar lack of skilled compilation. Fletcher has listed all Maori names appearing in the *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, the *Transactions of the New Zealand Institute*, White's *Ancient History of the Maori*, Grey's *Polynesian Mythology*, and Shortland's books. No distinction is made in the references between various persons or places bearing the same name, but the compilation provides a useful basis and, if edited and circulated, it might well be of use to other libraries. Our Manuscript Section contains several indexes of this nature that would



be more widely used by the student of New Zealand history if they were edited and published, or at any rate cyclostyled. Elsdon Best, for example, noted down sources of material on the Maoris from many of the early books on New Zealand; as few of the books he lists are indexed, his notes are specially useful. Editing of this nature could well be done by the Reference Librarian, but it does presuppose a sufficient number of assistants who can deal with the daily routines, thus leaving the Reference Librarian free.

A point that is worth mentioning under this heading, is the standard of bibliographies in books and theses on New Zealand. My work includes the perusal of manuscripts that are about to be offered for publication, and the authors, having realised in the course of their work in the Library that correct forms of entry for a book are important, submit their manuscript to me for comments from a reference librarian's point of view. This is an opportunity that we should welcome, for many of us know the time that can be spent in trying to identify obscure references. As many of our authors were students at some stage, I should like to see every student who is offering a thesis presented with a sheet of instructions, asking him to consult his library's catalogue, and if necessary a library assistant, for the correct way in which to refer to a book. Details about how to set out references, such as the British Standards Institution has issued (B.S.S. 1629:1950), could also be included in the sheet.

#### CONCLUSION

With so much of our history remaining to be written, or unable to be written because of losses through fires both accidental and wilful, it is not always possible to keep on searching for the answer to a question until we find it; but the important thing is to keep on until we have tried all the sources we can think of. Much of our early history is bound up closely with Australia and Great Britain, and once we have satisfied ourselves that the information is not available in New Zealand, we should look to overseas institutions for help. Such enquiries can be very rewarding, for if when a log, for instance, is located, a photocopy of it is ordered, one more original document is thereby added to New Zealand's collections of source materials. This process of noting what we lack, locating it, procuring it, and, when it arrives, seeing that it is documented so as to bring out its full usefulness, must always go hand in hand with reference work, because reference librarians and the readers whom they serve are closely concerned with the library's stock, and are in a good position to notice any gaps there might be.

Our collections will be more widely used, and our service more effective, when our aids to research are more numerous; owing to the difficulties of getting at information, much time is spent at present in searching. We can, however, only meet requests in accordance with the measure of help at our disposal, and until we can make our historical source materials more readily available to the student by the

publication of bibliographies and catalogues, we cannot expect to provide our enquirers with any quick or straightforward means of finding the answers to their queries. To compile such aids to research, we need to be able to include on the staffs of our special libraries, not only assistants who have time for something more than the daily round of questions, but specialists who have a real understanding of the books and other material with which they are working.



## STANDING EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

NOTES ON MEETING OF 22ND MARCH 1956

*Present:* D. M. Wylie (in the chair), G. T. Alley, A. G. Bagnall, H. J. Lorimer, W. J. McEldowney, R. N. O'Reilly, the Secretary, and the Hon. Editor.

The Chairman welcomed Mr. O'Reilly to the meeting and expressed the hope that there would be other occasions during the year on which Council members from outside Wellington would be able to attend meetings of the Standing Executive.

*Apology:* An apology from Mr. H. W. B. Bacon was sustained.

*Newsletter:* The Secretary reported that, in accordance with the decision of Council at its last meeting (1956/16 item 15), NZLA Newsletter No. 1 had been published. The report was received.

*1960 Conference:* A letter from the Dunedin City Council inviting the Association to hold its Jubilee conference in Dunedin was received. It was resolved that the City Council be thanked and informed that the invitation will be referred to the August meeting of Council.

*National Historic Places Trust:* The Secretary reported that copies of a Memorandum on the setting up of Regional Committees of the National Historic Places Trust had been circulated by the NZLA office to 35 libraries with a note drawing attention to the invitation to submit nominations for appointment to the Committees. The report was received.

*Visitors from Indonesia:* The Secretary reported that she had been asked by Mr. Dunningham to find out from the External Affairs Department the itinerary of Mr. Hutasoit, Secretary General of the Ministry of Education, and Mr. A. H. Nasution, Secretary of the National Library Board, who were expected to be in New Zealand for a week, and to try to arrange suitable library visits for them. Nothing was done, however, as requests to the Department for information were ignored. Mr. Alley stated that he had met both the men and knew that Mr. Nasution would be visiting Mr. Dunningham, but that their visit was so brief that it would have been impossible to fit in any other library visits. The reports were received.

*Customs Duty:* The Secretary reported that, arising from a report in the